A short story can be defined very generally as a brief piece of fictional writing. Short story writing is highly skilled as the writer only has a limited amount of space to capture and keep the reader’s attention.

Short stories have certain characteristics which make them easy to identify but the biggest clue is their length – they are not usually more than around 15 pages long making them very easy to read!

Key Elements of a good short story

GENRE - The kind of text (e.g. poetry, novel, drama and more specifically whether it is comedy, tragedy, horror etc…)

PLOT - The overall design of a story (e.g. its structure and the sequence of events)

CHARACTERISATION - The way we learn about a character. This is through either direct description (e.g. ‘The boy was nervous’) or indirect description (e.g. actions, speech, thoughts, appearance, setting)

NARRARIVE VOICE - The First Person Narrator tells the story in the first person (e.g. the use of ‘I’) they take part in the story and describe their own feelings about the events that have taken place. We see everything from his/her point of view.

The Third Person Narrator does not take part in the events of the story. This type of narrator knows everything including the thoughts and feelings of all the characters.

SETTING- The setting plays three main functions in a story. It tells us the historical and geographical location. It contributes to the mood/tone. It can sometimes play a part in the action.

CONFLICT & TENSION- Crucial to a good story. The conflict can be between two or more characters or there can be conflict in the mind of one person. We need conflict and tension to create a climax in a story. The climax is the point where the reader’s interest or excitement has reached its highest point.